GUIDE TO THE OR21 WOLEAI FILE

[This file contains specific information on the central Caroline islands of Eauripik, Elato, Faraulep, Gaferut, Ifaluk (the sample), Lamotrek, Pikelot, West Fayu, Woleai and their inhabitants. They are located in the Yap District of the Caroline Group, south and east of Yap and Ulithi and west of Truk. There are 53 islands and atolls in the group, but only about 3.3 square miles of land surface. While islands of this group have been known to Europeans since 1678, prolonged contact did not occur until the beginning of the twentieth century. Since the seventeenth century, Micronesia has been controlled successively by Spain, Germany and Japan. It is presently administered by the United States as a United Nations trusteeship. The total population of the Woleai group was only 1339 persons in 1930. The language spoken on these islands is Woleian. It is part of the Trukic subfamily of the Austronesian family. Even with inter-island dialectical differences, it is mutually intelligible with that of Truk, but not with Yap. Coconuts and fish provide the principal food on almost all of the islands. Taro and breadfruit are nearly universally cultivated. Dogs, hogs, and chickens are the only domesticated animals, and are eaten only rarely. Since most of the islands are small, settlement patterns are little differentiated. Farms and villages are scattered throughout the islands, more often facing the interior lagoon than the open sea. In the past, travel for commerce was frequent and farranging, going as far as 600 miles to Guam, Truk, and Yap. Recently with the death of the old sea captains, small boat travel is limited to neighboring islands. All of the islands contain the same eight named, localized, exogamous matrilineal clans, the first four of which are ranked with hereditary chiefs. The component lineages, which are smaller and more unstable, are still however the most

important groups on the islands. They regulate and own property, organize economic activity and are the recognized religious units. Despite missionary influence, the native religion, including a large store of medical knowledge, has remained intact. Island to island cultural variability is not great, but variations due to geographic and population size differences do exist.

There are 41 sources in the Woleai file, 11 are in English (1, 15, 16, 24, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 40, and 41), one is a translation from Spanish (23), three are translations from Japanese (36, 37, and 38), four are translations from French (12, 13, 34, and 35), and the remaining 22 are translations from German. However, a number of the sources are brief and eight are no more than a page or a table excerpted from a larger work. Except for source 41, all of the sources are on typewritten file slips and lack the Outline of World Cultures designation. 1: Burrows is the best introduction to the file. It is a detailed ethnography of Ifaluk. Eight sources (5, 10, 12, 13, 24, 34, 35, and 40) are nineteenth century travelers' accounts of the islands and contain varying amounts of geographic, ethnographic and naturalistic data. Twelve sources (6-9, 11, 14, 18-22, and 39) are in one way or another results of the German administration of the area and reflect the varying interests, from politics to public health, of concern to colonial administrations. 11: Born, by a German government doctor, may be the most generally descriptive of Woleaian culture of all of these sources. Three other sources (2, 3, and 4), the reports of the 1908-1910 German ethnographic expedition to the Central Carolines, are more tangentially related to the colonial administration. Four brief sources (25, 26, 27, and 30) present climatic information on the area and two more (15 and 16) present geographic data and

sailing instructions. There are two articles (28 and 29) on culture and personality in the Woleai group. 41: Bates and Abbott is a nontechnical account of the 1953 Pacific Science Board expedition to Ifaluk. The expedition contained an anthropologist, biologist, geologist, hydrologist, ichthyologist, and zoologist. Interdisciplinary material is presented on daily life, food gathering and diet as well as the special interests of each scientist. The file contains a variety of material and may be compared easily to the other files on island groups in the area. Most of the file was processed between 1950 and 1951, with an additional source processed in 1962.]